

Dhvanyaloka as a Space for Language and Literary DiscourseK, Nisha A¹ and Kaur, Monbinder²¹Research Scholar, Department of English, Tumkur University, Tumkur²Associate Professor, Department of English, Tumkur University, Tumkur**Abstract**

This paper attempts to explore the role of Dhvanyaloka, the Centre for English Studies, Research and Indigenous Arts in cultivating literary culture in Mysore. This paper tries to examine Dhvanyaloka as a sustainable intellectual space that has significantly contributed to the development of language and literary studies in India. The centre for Advanced studies, Princeton University fostered dreams in Professor C D Narasimhaiah to establish an Institution in Mysore in the same line. Founded by Professor C D Narasimhaiah in 1979 as an extension of the English department of the University of Mysore, Dhvanyaloka surfaced as a sole space bridging Indian and Western Literary traditions offering a platform for literary discourse, creative expression and cross-cultural dialogues. It served as a space for interdisciplinary dialogues which would aid in sustaining literary culture across generations. Through international seminars, symposiums, workshops and the publication of The Literary Criterion, Dhvanyaloka raised generations of scholars, authors and academicians, introducing Indian Aesthetics into English Literary Studies. Through these symposiums, Dhvanyaloka has encouraged circulation of ideas and promoted new theoretical directions in literary studies. By providing space for negotiations and discussions, Dhvanyaloka had tried to connect people. This paper highlights that such practices contribute to the sustainability of Literary Studies, by encouraging research scholars and sustaining multilingual engagement between Indian and Global literary traditions. Realization of Rasa through Dhvani, the acknowledgement of India's greatest contribution in the world of Poetics, justifies the name Dhvanyaloka to The Literary Criterion Centre. Dhvanyaloka has contributed to the concept of thinking globally while living locally. The paper emphasizes the redefinition of post-colonial literary criticism in Mysore, the cultural hub of Karnataka.

Keywords: Dhvanyaloka, Literary Culture, Mysore, Indian aesthetics, Western literary tradition.

Introduction of English education in Mysore:

“The State of Mysore under the benevolent rule of the Maharajas of the princely state of Mysore had enjoyed many advantages to bring about reforms. The British colonial rule in India for a period of nearly two centuries has brought about many changes in social and economic conditions to a great extent. The changes that were brought about in Indian society through education and intellectual activity as a result of the British colonial rule have been called by Indian historians as Renaissance” (Raj,159). The contribution of the Maharajas to the improvement of education has a long legacy.

“Western education in Mysore commenced in the last quarter of the 19th century. For the first time, education was available to everyone, regardless of class, caste, religion, or gender. This marked a shift toward equality. Previously, only upper-class men could access schools and pursue higher education. With the introduction of western education and English medium schools, this changed. Women and men from lower classes were also allowed to pursue higher education” (Chitra,152).” “The period of Cubbon coincided with Macaulay's minute on western education and Wood's dispatch on state control of public instruction, reflecting the spirit of the time. A free English school was opened by Krishnaraja Wodeyar in Mysore on October 1, 1840, with Rev. T. Hodson, a Wesleyan teacher, as its head. In 1842, the Wesleyan Mission established an English school called the Local Instructive Institution in Bangalore under Rev. J. Garret. A monthly allowance of Rs 50 was allocated for this school by the Commissioner. With the intention to keep up with the demand for English language training, Bangalore and Tumkur witnessed the opening of five schools by 1852. The government appointed a committee for the purpose of planning for the expansion and progression of education throughout the State, allocating Rs 7000 for education for the first time. The plan developed by J. Garret received approval from Cubbon, and the Native Educational Institution, which had become a high school in 1851, served as a model for other schools in the State. In Tumkur and Shimoga schools offered high school in 1852-53 and 1854 respectively. The school in Hassan, started in 1844 but closed four years later, was reopened as a simple Anglo-Vernacular school. During this time, the Wesleyan Mission also established an English school in Mysore” (Rao, 521).

“The Maharaja and the government set up Maharani's Girls' school in 1881 for girls in Mysore City. This institution is considered a milestone in the history of women's education in Mysore.

According to the Imperial Gazetteer of India (1908: 244), "One of the steps that gave an impetus to public female education was the establishment of the Maharani's Girls' School at Mysore City in 1881. Its influential patronage overcame all objections, and it presented an acceptable compromise between Western methods and Eastern views on suitable subjects for female education." The 1911-16 Quinquennial Report on Education (Government of Mysore 1918) noted that "Maharani's Girls' School had been successful in breaking down the prejudice against female instruction." However, women were progressing slowly in college education. The first institution for women was established in the years 1902-03 when Maharani's Girls' School in Mysore City became a college. A major moment in the history of higher education happened with the founding of the first university, the University of Mysore, in 1916. The development of the first University was part of a significant period in higher education history. Previous colleges within Mysore State were affiliated to the University of Madras" (Chitra, 157).

Literature Review:

My literature review is an attempt to assess the works done and published in this area of study, that is literary culture and those associated with Dhvanyaloka.

Literary and Cultural Explorations at Dhvanyaloka. by Ragini Ramachandran is a compilation of the reports of various seminars, conferences, workshops and symposia on diverse themes like Asian, African, American, Australian, Canadian and New Zealand literatures involving distinguished writers, critics, teachers and research scholars. The role of English as a complementary language in India, Protest literature, is there a climate of criticism in our literatures, are to mention a few. All the events hosted at Dhvanyaloka were compiled in the form of a book for assisting the research scholars who could access everything easily in one location.

N For Nobody by Professor C D Narasimhaiah is an autobiographical work which deals with the life of a small shopkeeper's son, from Closepet, the present Ramnagaram who learnt English from a village accountant then shifted to Mysore to study in Maharaja's college, then went to Cambridge University with a Rockefeller Fellowship and Princeton University and later returned to Mysore to work as a Professor of English and the Principal of Mysore University, trying to reshuffle the syllabus by adding Commonwealth Literature, American Literature and Indian Writing in English. The book also talks about the establishment of Dhvanyaloka, the cultural and literary centre, inspired by the Centre for Advanced Studies at Princeton University, where Albert Einstein walked

its hallways.

"Higher Education and Society in Mysore under British Rule." by Chithra M N is a work which investigates the nature of the relationship between education and society during the last quarter of the 19th century till India's independence. As western education was introduced in Mysore during that particular period, with the aim to provide job opportunities in the government sector, that period was considered to be very significant. Education was not restricted to the people belonging to higher caste, but everyone irrespective of caste, religion or sex were given the opportunity to pursue higher education, which posed a threat to the traditional order and its values. M N Chithra had tried to examine the reaction of the society to the challenge posed by western education and the consequence,

"Empowerment of Women through Education" by Professor Nirmal Raj in the Princely State of Mysore" attempts to comprehend the main aspects of social reforms like emancipation of women and the empowerment of women through education, removal of disagreeable practices like untouchability and the upliftment of the downtrodden classes through education. The rule of the British for more than two centuries had brought about a change in the Indian society resulting in social reformation. The generous Maharajas had the power and position to introduce reformation in the society for the benefit of its subjects, particularly women.

Modern Mysore Vol-1 by Shama Rao stresses on education in Mysore especially the introduction of English education and the opening of English schools by the Maharaja, Krishnaraja Wodeyar in 1840 in Mysore and how he took personal interest in the school, being there for the annual distribution of prizes to the meritorious students. He states that the period of Cubbon and Macaulay's minute on western education coincided with Wood's dispatch on the state control of public instruction and Mysore also caught the spirit of the time. This book also deals with the free English school started by the Maharaja at Mysore under the supervision of the Wesleyan missionary, Rev T Hodson.

"Critical review of the Rasa concept in Dhvanyaloka" by P G Renjith talks about how Anandavardhana, a significant figure in ancient Indian literary theory revolutionized Sanskrit Poetics with his concept of dhvani which means suggestion, introduced in his seminal work Dhvanyaloka. He tries to assert that the enjoyment of poetry doesn't lie in its explicit meaning but in the suggestive power which arouses emotional responses in the reader. So, the aesthetic

experience which is rasa is caused by the suggestive meaning which is dhvani. Renjith points out how Anadavardhanas's work remains influential even to this day.

TN Dhar through his article, "Autobiographical Grumbling" throws light on the autobiographical work written by Professor C D Narasimhaiah which, the Professor himself referred to as an autobiographical grumbling modestly but through this article Dhar proves that he doesn't agree with the Professor's modest opinion as its structure, form and content shows that it is not a grumbling but follows the theory of autobiographical writing and Dhar demonstrates how it is a well-directed piece of writing which highlights Narasimhaiah, as a teacher widening the frontiers of English studies in the country.

The literature review has thrown light on the literary culture of Mysore and the role of Dhvanyaloka in the dissemination of literary culture in Mysore. It has also shed light on the fact that no prior work has been done on Dhvanyaloka as a space for Language and Literary Discourse.

Research Gap:

The literature review indicates that there is a gap in research concerning the role of literary Institutions like Dhvanyaloka in providing space for language and literary discourse. The exploration of the contribution of literary institutions has been notably overlooked. This research attempts to fill that void by examining the role of Dhvanyaloka in providing a space for language and literary discourse.

Objectives:

To explore the role of Dhvanyaloka in the dissemination of literary culture in Mysore

To examine the role of Dhvanyaloka in providing space for Language and Literary discourse in Mysore

Methodology:

The cultural studies tradition of examining the interaction between lived experiences, discourses and texts as well as the political, social and historical context, demands the methodologies to be combined. Here New Historicism and Hermeneutics has emerged as the combined methodologies used. New Historicism is the methodological approach in the field of literary and cultural studies that gives prominence to the historical contexts in understanding the cultural trend. In qualitative research multiple methods can be used. Archival research is an important aspect of New Historicism. I have made use of archival research by visiting the Mysore Divisional Archives for

referring to the historical records and also the Mysore University library. I have also interviewed people related to Dhavnyaloka and Mysore University like the Director of Dhvanyaloka, Professor C N Srinath and Professor Belliappa, the former Professor at Mysore University, a former student of C D Narasimhaiah and the former Vice Chancellor, Rajiv Gandhi University. Hermeneutics is an approach to interpretive research which refers to extracting meanings from texts. Books like the autobiographical work of Professor C D Narasimhaiah has been interpreted to throw light on my topic. Articles written on the autobiography has also been interpreted. These methods have helped me in the reconstruction of the literary institution, Dhvanyaloka, with special emphasis on the space for language and literary discourse.

Results and Finding:

The research study reveals that Dhvanyaloka functioned as a vibrant intellectual space that encouraged dialogue among writers, critics, scholars, and students. Through seminars, workshops, and lectures, and the publication of *The Literary Criterion* it created opportunities for critical engagement with literature and language, promoting a culture of discussion and scholarly exchange.

This paper demonstrates that Dhvnyaloka provided an intellectual space for scholarly discourses, encouraged scholarly networks and sustained the study of language and literature in Mysore.

Dhvanyaloka as a cultural and Literary Centre:

“Professor C D Narasimhaiah, who hailed from the town Closepet, the current Ramangaram (Narasimhaiah,1), after graduating from Maharajas college, Mysore, pursued higher education at Cambridge and Princeton University, returned to Mysore to serve as a Professor at Maharajas college and Mysore University. Professor C D Narasimhaiah felt privileged to be a resident of Mysore, spurning offers from Delhi, reluctant to leave Mysore” (Narasimhaiah,293).

“The Institute of Advanced Studies at Princeton University, where Albert Einstein once roamed the hallways like a prophet of the biblical days, gave the impetus to Professor C D Narasimhaiah's dream of setting up an institution at Mysore in a much similar spirit” (Narasimhaiah,291).

“Conceived as an extension to the English Department, University of Mysore, Professor C D Narasimhaiah fought hard to manifest Dhvanyaloka. At Dhvanyaloka, named after the treatise of the 9th-century Kashmiri philosopher Anandavardhana, he set up a centre for English Studies, Research and Indigenous Arts in 1979, with his youngest son Sanjay being an essential

collaborator in the realization of Dhvanyaloka, and with his colleagues as members, approving its aims and objectives, making him feel contented to have them around at most of the events at the centre. Dhvanyaloka is the loftiest platform of critical thinking. From realizing Rasa through Dhvani comes the acceptance of India's greatest contribution in the world of Poetics. Hence the name Dhvanyaloka was proposed by The Literary Criterion Centre, so that it would look at all literature and arts, Indian or otherwise, from the rasa-dhvani standpoint-the bold claim that India's literary and artistic traditions rightfully deserve a platform for criticism" (Narasimhaiah, 305). Choosing the name 'Dhvanyaloka' after the landmark 9th-century treatise of Anandavardhana evidently was to consciously link the Centre with its own ancient traditions of poetics reaching out for the actualization of aesthetic experience-through rasa-dhvani. The creation of Dhvanyaloka was not merely an act of imitation, but rather a deliberate argument for the necessity of such centres in India, where critical thinking and creative inquiry can flourish outside the constraints of traditional academia, these institutions not rising by accident but through sustained vision and effort, in a world where academic pursuit is utilitarian, Dhvanyaloka stands for the highest ideals of scholarship, meaning, and understanding of cultures.

"Rasa-Dhvani was the soul of *Dhvanyaloka*. In *Dhvanyaloka*, Anandavardhana argues that the highest form of poetic expression is not ornament, nor idea, but rasa suggested through dhvani. Rasa-dhvani therefore moves poetry from statement to experience. Rasa-dhvani becomes relevant because, a literary culture grounded in dhvani prioritizes interpretive depth over surface meaning. In such a culture literature is not consumed but experienced and meaning is not imposed but suggested and collaboratively realized. The poem should incite a deeper response in the reader which invites readers to infer hidden meanings. This suggestion can manifest in various forms, from ambiguous phrases to complex metaphors and allusions that require the reader to engage actively with the text. According to Bhamaha, it is this indirect communication that makes poetry more powerful, as it allows the audience to draw from their own experiences and emotions, adding to the richness of the poetic experience" (Renjith, 13364).

Dhvanyaloka as a space for Language and Literary Discourse:

Here space refers to intellectual space where disagreement and debate was allowed, encouraging interpretation, permitting multiple perspectives, indulging in critical dialogues, where the space continued to exist through ideas exchanged, papers published and networks formed, turning it into

a space for thinking. It is also a cultural, space where cultural values were negotiated, a place where local and global interacted. It also mediated between Kannada literary tradition and English literary modernity. This place also encouraged translation works. In the context of literary discourse, space refers to intellectual, institutional and cultural field that enabled production, circulation and negotiation of literary ideas. It was a social space as well as writers, academicians, scholars, critics, institutions, universities and journals created a network of relations. Dhvanyaloka was a site where literary debates were institutionalized, critical vocabularies were formed and networks were sustained.

For Professor C. D. Narasimhaiah, Founder-Director, Dhvanyaloka, the sustainable intellectual space did not merely teach literature, it cultivated refined aesthetic sensibility. Literature preserves emotional memory, refines sensibility and rasa is not a historical data, it is a living experience. Mysore's literary culture is not derivative of colonial English education, but rooted in deep indigenous aesthetic theory. Dhvanyaloka in Mysore represents not merely an institutional space for English literary studies, but a modern embodiment of Anandavardhana's aesthetic vision, where rasa-dhvani becomes a living principle of interpretive practice, sustaining a culture of reflective, dialogic, and affective engagement with literature.

"For Professor C D Narasimhaiah, a man with a foresight and innovation, who guided its destiny for twenty-five years from 1979 to 2005, Dhvanyaloka was a dream turned into reality. A fervent supporter of Macaulay's "imperishable empire of ideas", he wished his dream centre to be a meeting place of all like-minded intellectuals, which was made possible, a homage to his concern to live the life of the mind" (Ramachandra.1) "Since its inception, Dhvanyaloka has hosted over fifty seminars, conferences, workshops, and symposia in various themes from Asian, African, American, Australian, and Canadian literatures with writers, critics, teachers, and research scholars involved in the proceedings, opening up a space in Mysore for global literary conversations, the first few years, being unstable, for every seminar required deputation of teachers from various parts of the country" (Narasimhaiah,299), yet Dhvanyaloka demonstrated a remarkable resilience and commitment to critical inquiry. The efforts to sustain these dialogues in the face of logistical challenges reflect the dedication to nurturing literary scholarship. "A seminar was organized on The Role of English as a Complementary Language, arguing for complementarity of English" (Ramachandra,1). "Prof CD Narasimhaiah observed that the success of English lay in its

extraordinary flexibility and accommodativeness. Dr Bellappa, Secretary, IACLALS satisfied with the proceedings of the seminar, expressed hope that Dhvanyaloka would turn to a haven for scholars wishing to perpetuate Macaulay's imperishable empire of ideas" (Ramachandra,10). This homage speaks of Dhvanyaloka's successful transformation of Mysore into a nodule in the larger network of English literary culture and criticism. The absolute volume and variety of academic activity hosted at Dhvanyaloka confirms its significant cultural role. Its institutional toughness, international outreach, and dialogic culture helped cultivate a distinctive literary space that sustained both intellectual inquiry and cultural pluralism.

"Encouraged by T S Eliot's *The Criterion* and F R Leavis' *Scrutiny*, *The Literary Criterion* published by Professor C D Narasimhaiah, with the support of previous students and V L D' Souza, who was then principal and later Vice Chancellor, was launched in 1952. What happened next is a momentous contribution to the intellectual life of the Department of English at the University of Mysore. D'Souza writes, "First I must congratulate you on *The Literary Criterion* a magazine that I consider a very distinguished contribution to Literary History in India and that has attracted the attention of the literary fraternity." D'Souza granted C D Narasimhaiah permission to collect the small nominal subscription for the magazine" (Narasimhaiah,179). Unlike its Western counterpart, *The Literary Criterion* was indigenizing literary criticism in a post-colonial India. The dominance of the imported cannons allowed for a unique critical voice through the literary magazine. V.L D'Souza had made an affectionate tribute to Professor C D Narasimhaiah. "The *Literary Criterion* has made literary history in India for with two issues it has established itself and won the praise of the literary public. Professor Narsimhaiah who has launched this venture deserves every encouragement. He has stuck a new note altogether in University teaching and the teaching of literature and students are responding vigorously to his leadership in a new path of literary appreciation and appraisal. The grafting of Cambridge and Princeton on a hardy Mysore stock is bearing fruit and our university is the richer for it". "Professor C D Narasimhaiah is not a baneful product of the introduction of the English education in India, which was aimed at producing slavish admirers of the West, who would think nothing of turning against their magnificent tradition and literary heritage. This admission also reflects on the kind of English teacher he was trying to be, reading and teaching English Literature, while writing about it, but

also steeped in the vibrant literatures of his country. Narasimhaiah speaks on how the seeds of his life as a teacher came from his conscientious parents” (Dhar,16).

“Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies, ACLALS, an organization focused on promoting Commonwealth literature began at Leeds University in 1964” (Belliappa) marking an important moment for a field dealing with questions on moral authority, as it intended to legitimize the readings of the voices from former colonies in the 1960s that were contesting constructs of literary standards manifested with English versions of themselves, Professor Belliappa was offered the position of assistant editor of the ACLALS bulletin at Mysore University. “The Indian Association of Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies, IACLALS launched in Mysore in 1974 with the two-fold vision to the Indian context gave it a unique postcolonial drive with Professor C D Narasimhaiah as Chairperson and Prof Belliappa as the Secretary. Dhvanyaloka being involved in ACLALS, placed it on the international literary map” (Belliappa).

“The Role of English as a Complementary Language, was an important effort to highlight the cultural relevance of English and its ubiquity especially in the Indian context, acting as a bridge linking Dhvanyaloka with literary & cultural exchanges. In an attempt to develop reasoning regarding literatures ethical choices, seminars such as Is There a Climate of Criticism in our Literatures? considered the emergences and growth of a critical tradition in Indian and Commonwealth literatures. The Dhvanyaloka orientation towards introducing social, political, and cultural dynamics into the conversations around literature and to enhance the literary analytical frame appeared in one of the events, Protest Literature that included thinkers such a Mulk Raj Anand and Justice Krishna Iyer” (Ramachandra,34). The Dhvanyaloka inclination to demonstrate a more nuanced way of articulating an interpretation of art, in terms of literature, was through seminars attempting to discover a common sphere combining East and West. Literary Aesthetics such as Towards the Formulation of a Common Poetic for Indian Literatures Today in 1984. The seminars, symposia, and workshops which were conducted at Dhvanyaloka from 1981 to 2006 were cauldrons for the fusion of Eastern and Western perspectives and to spawn dialogue and critique promoting the need for their simultaneous presence. 'The English India Needs Today' to our mind emphasizes the cultural importance of English in India, a deliberate act of retrieval, establishing a bridge for English, confronting linguistic imperialism. The applicability of Black

American Literature allowing Indian voices to join in global literary discussions emphasizes a similar universality of marginalization, enabling Indians to locate their historical experience contesting global constructions promoting a literature that is grounded and transnational. Kipling's India and T S Eliot and the Indian Literary Scene examined the legacies of influential western literary figures from an Indian point of view, revealing a possibility for Indian scholars to adapt prevailing western literary models into their own cultural conditions. The 'Indian and Western Poetics at work' considers using Indian standards for Indian and western literatures and challenging the hegemony of western critical institutions recognizing their own native ideologies, Rasa and Dhvani, as potentially opening the possibility of engaging western critical tools. Dhvanyaloka redefines post-colonial literary criticism by reading global literature, especially from former colonies, discussing and critiquing it, de-centering western archetypes, turning Mysore into a centre of intellectual inquiry and reinterpretation.

Discussion:

Dhvanyaloka added an impetus in transforming Mysore into a lively centre of literary interaction promoting prolonged dialogue between Indian and global literary traditions. Dhvanyaloka functioned not merely as an institution but as a centre providing cultural, literary and intellectual space where literary exchanges happened and critical inquiry was encouraged. Dhvanyaloka created an alternative academic space beyond the formal universities, fostering interdisciplinary literary conversations, linking local, national and international literary scholars. English served as a language of literary criticism, the language connecting local and global scholars and as a language for academic exchange. Translated works were encouraged at Dhavnyaloka, promoting hybridity and also giving prominence to Indian writing in English. Dhvanyaloka negotiated between tradition and modernity. Dhvani of Dhvanyaloka is from Sanskrit while engaging modern English literary criticism. Dhavanyaloka played a major role in moulding literary scholars and writers as well as shaping literary criticism, encouraging postcolonial literary discourse. Through seminars, symposiums, conferences and workshops, Dhvanyaloka encouraged critical thinking, scholarly discussions and promoted literary culture in Mysore and beyond, inviting scholars from around the globe.

Conclusion:

Dhvanyaloka through the publication of *The Literary Criterion* and the hosting of seminars, symposia and workshops established an intellectual activity, encouraging creative writing and critical thinking, rejecting categorical distinctions between east and west, tradition and modernity, native and foreign, advocating a literary culture where ideologies cross over and culminate, confirming an active, relevant and globalized Indian literature, highlighting Professor C D Narasimhaiah's concept of thinking globally while living locally. It augmented the literary landscape of Mysore by promoting engagement with English literature while staying rooted in Indian culture. It remains an acknowledgement of Professor Narasimhaiah's belief that literature can promote personal growth, create cultural awareness and global dialogue.

Recommendations:

Even though Dhvanyaloka and other literary institutions in India has contributed to the growth of literary criticism and literary culture in Mysore and beyond, not much work has been done on Dhvanyaloka or other literary institutions. A Comparative study of Dhvanyaloka and other literary institutions can be recommended for future study.

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